

FOR
JUSTICE,

To every individual Member of Parliament
Against the unparallel'd Corruptions, and most
cruel Oppression, Tyranny, and incommensurable Injustice
exercised by the Commissioners for Compounding
sitting at Haberdashers Hall London,

Upon Corner Christopher Cheesman, late Agent for
Sequestrations in the County of Berks the Author hereof
Whomost humbly implores the assistance of the worthy Mem-
bers and good Patriots of this honourable Council and Com-
monwealth, and that some one or more would move effectu-
ally to have his Petition and Appeal (delivered in to the Hands
of Mr. Speaker, Feb. 24. last, against the said Commission-
ers) read, and justice done according to the truth thereof. In
This being his fifth application to this Honourable Council for
Justice against them, and above two yeers of his most cruel
oppression by reason of them, occasioned by his faithful dis-
charge of Trust reposed in him by Parliament, and under a
most solemn OATH.

Deut. 1. 16. I charged your Judges the same time saying, Hear the Con-
troversies betwixt your brethren, and judge righteous judgement between eve-
ry man and his brother. Ye shall have no respect of persons in judgement,
but shall hear the small as well as the great. Ye shall not fear the face of
man: for the judgement is Gods. 1 Kings 8. 32. That thou mayest condemn the wicked, to bring his wickedness
upon his own head, and justify the righteous, to give him according to his
righteousness. Ye shall seek judgement among your selves, and know what is good, and not
cause the oppressed to cry out for the violence of the mighty. For hath not
the Lord shewed thee, O man, what is good, and what he requireth of thee?
Surely to do justice, and love mercy. And, whatsoever ye would that men
should do unto you, even so do unto them. Matth. 7. 12. Mal. 8. Job 35. 9.
1. and 34. 4.

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Christopher Cheesman



Right Honorable Senators



Would God I had not just cause to cry out for Justice in this extreme manner as I have been constrained to do, many months together, and yet am not heard; yea, though I have cryed aloud, there is no judgement: which is a thing so contrary to Religion, Conscience good Nature, and the Honour of men professing Principles of God and goodness, that I am very much astonished to think of it; and that a Parliament, the Representative Body of a Nation which hath so abominated things of so unworthy a nature, with Declarations to the world of their resolutions against such things, and yet should by the craft of any men whatsoever be kept from hearing such doleful Outcries and Complaints, and not to vouchsafe an enquiry into the matter, to see whether it be according to the cry thereof yea or no. I am sure ye may learn so much from the pure, holy, and just God, in the case of *Sodom*. Yea, though I have accused several sorts of men with crimes of a very high nature, even breach of OATH against the great God; and Unfaithfulness to men: offences against which I am sure you have declared in words to the Nation, with the greatest indignation, zeal and detestation of any Council that ever sate upon the face of the earth: and yet for you to suffer such evils to go unpunished, and such complainers and cryers out for Justice against persons of such desperate principles, to go continually empty away, will prove of very sad consequence. And for a man and his family to be brought even unto death, for the faithful discharge of Trust reposed in him by Parliament, in the very time of Parliament sitting by most cruel oppressive men exercising an Arbitrary power, and can obtain no relief, nor have any manner of justice against them, presageth no good to this Nation.

Oh.

Oh what just cause have we to cry out with the Prophet, *We looked for judgement, but beheld oppression; for righteousness, but beheld a cry. Judgement is far from us, neither doth righteousness come neere us. Judgement is turned backward, and justice standeth afar off. Truth is fallen in the streets, and equity cannot enter. Yea, truth faileth, and he that refraineth from evil, maketh himself a prey.* Oh the experiences we have of these things! See we not evil men encouraged in their evil ways, and the good discouraged in the ways of equity? Know we not that transgression daily multiplies, and evils enumerate, for want of the execution of impartial Justice? Did not all Israel fear Solomon, because they saw that the wisdom of God was in him to do justice? and yet will not you do justice, that ye may be feared also? *ISAIAH*

Oh the insolence and violence of corrupt and unfaithful men! how merciless are they, because the Bowers frown upon such who in sincerity of heart, for publike ends discover their perfidious and abominable doings! Oh what Powers do they unite, to destroy such who are faithful in their generation! Good Lord! how long wilt thou suffer the Powers to be a terror to good works, and the encouragement of evil? You did once cry out yourselves, how grievous a curse it would be, if God in judgement should suffer the Power of this Nation to be made use of against itself. (*Book 1. Declar. p. 213.*) But Oh how much greater would the curse be, and more heavey judgement to this Nation, for the sword of Justice to be made use of contrary to the end appointed by the wise God and Governour of the world! *ISAIAH*

There was a time when ye much complained of the late King's discountenance of honest men. (*Book 1. Declar. p. 8, 9, 10*) Judges were turn'd out of their places, for refusing to go against their Oathes and Consciences; others so awed, that they durst not do their duties? Lawyers were check'd for being faithful to their Clients; Solicitors and Attorneys were threatened, and some punished, for following lawful Suits; by which means, all the approaches to Justice were interrupt'd and forecluded, whereby the common Justice of the Nation was much endangered; not only by opening ways of employment in places of

Trust and Power, to men of weak parts; but giving occasion to Bribery, Extortion, and Partiality. Honest men were so far from being employed in any Place of Trust and Power, that they were neglected, discountenanced, and upon all occasions injured and oppressed. *Q* worthy Patriots! are not such evils to be as much abhorred now as then? And are they not as destructive to Humane society now as then? Will not liberty given men to exercise Arbitrary power, as surely bring destruction upon you and all that take part with you, as upon the late King and his adherents? If the audaciousness of men employed by you be such, that they dare even under your noses, in the time of your sitting, to trample upon and contemn all your Laws, and break your OATHS, and, as it were in defiance of you and your Authority, admit of no other guide than their own Wills, What can be expected, but utter ruine and desolation? The Law (said M. *Burn*) puts a difference betwixt good and evil, betwixt just and unjust. Take away the Law, and all things will fall into confusion; every man will become a Law unto himself: which, in the depraved condition of Humane nature, must needs produce many great enormities: Lust will become a law, and Envy will become a law, Covetousness and Ambition will become laws; and what dictates, what decisions such Laws will produce, may easily be discerned. And it may as easily be discerned, of what desperate Principles such men are, who dare upon all occasions make use of the name of their God, to bring about their evil designs; and what the effects thereof will be. And is it not as clear, that *BATEMAN*, *JENINGS*, and *RUSDEN* had Laws to walk by? See also your Declarations, Ordinances, Orders, Instructions, and OATHS, from time to time, since 1643.

April 1. you said it was most agreeable to common Justice, that the Sequestrations should be converted and applied towards the supportation of the great charges of the Commonwealth, and for easing the good people therein. And if any person whatsoever (*Aug. 19. 1643.*) should wittingly or willingly conceal any the Sequestrations, That then he should forfeit treble the value thereof. Committees and Sequestrators were strictly commanded to use their best care and diligence in managing the said estates.

estates. (Nov. 18. 1643.) And in all particulars to guide themselves by the Ordinances of Parliament. Complaints by you were made, that the unfaithful acting of Sequestrators and Committees was very prejudicial and disserviceable to the Commonwealth: for remedy whereof, you imposed on them an OATH, to prevent the like in time to come. (May 27. 1644.) And all Committees and Solicitors for Sequestrations, were to return a List of all estates that were or had been under Sequestration, to Goldsmiths Hall *London*. (Nov. 10. 1646. And to whom the said estates were let with the value of them before the Wars: that such estates should be let at the utmost improved yearly value that any man would give for the same. (Decemb. 8. 1646.) That all Leases and Grants at under-value, should be void. And for better regulating Sequestrations, and reforming and preventing abuses therein, you did Ordain, that all Solicitors should send up to the Treasurers at Guild-Hall *London*, a true and perfect Inventory of all personal estates by them sequestred, with an exact Particular of all annual Rents, Profits, and Fines arising or issuing of all Houses and Lands. (Aug. 6. 1648.) You did again (for the better regulating reforming, and preventing of abuses and miscarriages in the managing the said Sequestrations) ordain, (Aug. 25. 1648.) that every person or persons employed, or to be employed, should take the Oath prescribed by your Ordinance of May 27. 1643. And if any should be found negligent, or not perform their duties (as you then feared too many would not) you did then ordain, that Capt. *William Stevenson* should be authorized to bring all such persons to answer their contempt of Parliamentary authority, and to receive condign punishment according to their demerits. And yet further to manifest your disapprobation of the Sequestrators negligent managing the Sequestrations in the several Counties, and your own resolutions and desires to improve the same to the advantage of the Commonwealth, in order to abatement of some of the Taxes therein) did settle the same in the hands of the Commissioners (for compounding with Delinquents) and Sub-commissioners in the several Counties of *England*; and did engage every person employed in or about Sequestrations, under a most solemn OATH, prescribed by your Act of April 15.

1550. to put your Act of Jan. 29. 1649. in execution, with all Orders, Ordinances, and Instructions of Parliament, for the right managing thereof.

And truly, had not I seriously believed that you did really intend those you employed should have guided themselves by your Laws and Instructions, I would never have run my self upon so desperate a Rock, in asserting and vindicating your power and Authority, which has proved very destructive to my self and family; and yet you will not do me right against those capital offenders I have so often complained of to this honourable Council: which is contrary to your engagements against such offenders, and promises of encouragement to well-doers. I very well remember your resolutions once, to inflict exemplary punishment upon all such, according to their demerits as should be found refractory and disobedient unto your commands made known to them; and that you would use all means to bring such to a legal Trial for such their offences. (*Book 1. Decr. p. 696.*) And you did faithfully promise and engage also, that such persons, which perform their duties to the Publike, should be protected and secured, in their persons, liberties and estates, by Authority of Parliament: and this you would faithfully perform, according to your former engagements, as you then said, (*Book 1. Decr. p. 377.*) You promised very solemnly also, that you would be willing and ready upon all occasions, to assist and protect all those that were employed in the Service of the Commonwealth in the Battel of *Edge-bill*, with your lives and fortunes, to the utmost of your power; and ordered the same to be recorded in Parliament. (*Book 1. Decr. p. 744.*) It's now above ten years since ye made this promise; which I have a right to in particular. Neither was I faithful to this honorable Council and Commonwealth there only, but have so continued ever since, and never brake my engagements; nor have I been found disobedient to your commands: therefore I now expect assistance from this honourable Council, according to your promises and solemn engagements, not only at that time, but many times since. And I hope you will do me Justice, otherwise I see nothing but destruction attending me and my family: a very evil requital for my faithfulness; and A bad example to others: for if such abominable

ble things be suffered, what can be expected, but the filling the whole Nation with Bribery, Extortion, Partiality, Perjury, and all manner of oppression and cruelty? For if most cruel oppression must be the portion of him which complains of such offences or offenders, Who will then complain, or who will be honest amongst men? Nay, who dares to be honest, when he shall see another stript and whipt out of his livelihood, for so being? But my case is such at this time: I am most cruelly oppressed by unreasonable men, who have feloniously broken the Laws of this Nation and robbed me of my livelihood, and also endeavour to take away my good name; and all for being faithful to what you had engaged me by OATH; and yet to obtain no manner of Justice against them, nor the least encouragement from this honourable Council who employed me, being the Supreme Authority, is a very sad thing to me and my family, and of a very dangerous nature to the Publike. And that all your Promises, Protestations, solemn OATHS and Imprecations, with your most transcendent Declarations to the world on the behalf of Justice and Righteousness, should no more be regarded, is a fearful judgement, and a most grievous curse upon this Nation. And for you to make so much ado about making Laws, and prescribing Rules to walk by, under several OATHS, to prevent Fraud and Cozenage, and yet not to hear complaints against such, is most incredible to any who shall only read your Declarations.

But further, may it please this honourable Council, because I would not, if it be possible, any more trouble you with such extraordinary and unusual Complaints and Outcries, the original hereof being the unparall'd corruptions and wilful contempt of *THO. BATEMAN*, *EDW. JENINGS*, and *JOHN RUSDEN*, late Sub-commissioners for Sequestrations in the County of *Berks*, being authorized thereunto by your Act of *Jan. 25. 1649.* who had engaged themselves under your most solemn OATH, prescribed by your Act of *April 15. 1650.* yet notwithstanding, though they had held up their hands, and sworn by the Name of the eternal God, to walk according to your Laws and Instructions, they presently turned their backs upon all, as if they had neither feared God, nor revered man. Upon which, (about the beginning of *November, 1650.*) I,

in

in as Christianlike manner as possible I could conceive of, repaired to Haberdashers Hall, and in private acquainted the Commissioners for Compounding with the same. They presently pretended a great deal of good will towards me, saying they had heard so much as I then told them, by others; and further, that the Parliament would consider such men as I for our faithfulness. But after they had paus'd a little upon the business, they told me I must produce witnesses; and so they put me upon an expensive way of prosecution, about four months together, before they would suffer the business to come to a hearing. And then they acquitted the said Sub-commissioners, notwithstanding I had produced 7 Witnesses against them; who did also make it appear by Oath upon Record that the said Subcommissioners were guilty of what I accused them with. Nevertheless, the Commissioners for Compounding sent them home to their Trust which they had so much abused, but turned me out of mine.

And withal, the better to carry on their designe, they sent one *Gardner* to be Agent to the said Subcommissioners. After which, they went on in their old way of deceit about ten months without any alteration, as if, in defiance of the Parliament, or any that did prosecute them, they would confirm all they had done. But being still in prosecution of the business against them, did, upon the first of *January* last, bring the business to another hearing: upon which day, I produced the evidence of above 40 Witnesses more. And though it then appeared, by the testimony of above 70 Witnesses that they damaged the Commonwealth above 1500 *l. per an.* yet would they not dismiss them in open Court, to the terrour of evil doers, as they ought to have done; but deferred it till another day, and then did it in private. All which implies a grand Confederacie between the Commissioners and Subcommissioners; and indeed, must needs render the Parliament unto the world as a meer cypher, and both the Commissioners and Subcommissioners to be Lords Paramount unto them; neither would they restore me to my employment, but continue the said *Gardner* to this day; and they were so far from giving me reparations, that they would not give me money expended. So that although at first (as many can witness) honest, religious, conscientious, godly men, was the character I gave of them; time and woful experience makes me confess my mistake, and hath taught me to say, That they are more cruel then murderers, and more ungentile then common thieves.

Leaving the consideration hereof to the consideration of this honourable Council, I remain, expecting Justice.

Christopher Cheesman.